

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 1, 3 and 4 are currently being amended. Claims 3 and 4 have been amended to change their dependency. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found at least in FIGs. 2-5, for example. No new matter is being added.

This amendment adds, changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1 and 3-34 are now pending in this application.

Allowable subject matter

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 5-8 and 10-34 are allowed, and that claims 3, 4 and 9 contain allowable subject matter.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 3 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for being dependent on a cancelled claim. Claims 3 and 4 have been amended to depend from pending claim 1, thus overcoming the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,870,896 to Clark et al. ("Clark"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1, as amended, recites “a strainer housed in the valve casing, for surrounding the valve body of the first valve device,” “wherein an axial direction of the main steam outlet portion is provided so as to be perpendicular to an axial direction of the main steam inlet portion, the axial direction of the main steam outlet portion and the axial direction of the main steam inlet portion being parallel to a plane perpendicular to the valve rod of the first valve device,” and “wherein the closing portion provided in the strainer is disposed at a position opposite to a side of the main steam outlet.” Clark fails to disclose the feature of “closing portion provided in the strainer is disposed at a position opposite to a side of the main steam outlet” in the context of the arrangement of the axial directions of the main steam outlet portion and main steam inlet portion as recited in claim 1.

In Clark, the stop valve 16 incorporates the strainer 28. Thus, because claim 1 requires “a strainer housed in the valve casing, for surrounding the valve body of the first valve device,” the stop valve 16 must correspond to the first valve device of claim 1, not the second valve device. Clark, however, does not disclose that the axial directions of its main steam inlets and main steam outlets are parallel to a plane perpendicular to any valve rod of the stop valve 16, while at the same time being perpendicular to each other. In fact, Clark does not disclose a valve rod for its stop valve 16, but even if Clark were to have such a valve rod, the rod would be expected to be in a direction perpendicular to the page in FIG. 2. In this case, the axial directions of its main steam inlets and main steam outlets would not be parallel to the plane of the rod, while at the same time being perpendicular to each other. Clark fails to anticipate claim 1 for at least this reason.

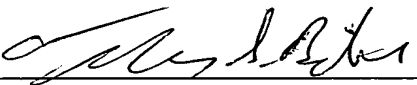
Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a

check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing or a credit card payment form being unsigned, providing incorrect information resulting in a rejected credit card transaction, or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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